

High Halstow Parish Council

50 Pepys Way • Strood • Rochester • Kent • ME2 3LL
Tel: 01634 710086 • e-mail: clerk@highhalstow-pc.gov.uk
Website : www.highhalstow-pc.gov.uk



MINUTES

Parish Council Meeting Wednesday 21st April 2021 Virtual Meeting ~ 7.30 pm

Attendees: Cllr G. Crozer (Chairman) Cllr C. Watson (Vice-Chair)
Cllr R. Collins Cllr M. Stone
Cllr G. Jerreat Cllr T. Munday
Cllr M. Buckland Cllr C. MacFarlane
Ward Cllr R. Sands Mrs J. Allen (Clerk)

Members of the public: One (1)

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm

The Chairman, Cllr G. Crozer, opened the meeting and thanked the members of the Parish Council and the Parishioner for attending.

1. Apologies for absence

[HHPC3025:21.04.21](#) Cllr G. Crozer spoke to confirm that he had received an apology for absence from Cllr L. Atkinson, who was attending a meeting elsewhere.

2. To receive Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

[HHPC3026:21.04.21](#) Cllr T. Munday spoke to declare a personal interest, owing to his position as the Chairman of the High Halstow Cricket Club and being the joint director of Mail Master Ltd.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

a). To receive and approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10th March 2021.

[HHPC3027:21.04.21](#) The minutes of the previous Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 10th March 2021, were submitted by the Clerk. It was proposed by Cllr R. Collins to approve the minutes as a correct record. This proposal was seconded by Cllr M. Stone and unanimously agreed.

4. Matters arising from the minutes (not otherwise on the agenda)

[HHPC3028:21.04.21](#) Cllr M. Stone spoke to enquire if the £150.00 donation to wHoo Cares had been paid. The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to advise that she was waiting for the community interest company's account details in order to make a BACS transaction.

5. Ward Councillor report

[HHPC3029:21.04.21](#) Ward Cllr R. Sands spoke address the contents of the last 'Rural Liaison' Meeting where he mentioned the opening of a new customs depot on the Isle of Grain. He advised that having raised the point with Head of Planning at Medway Council, that Mr D. Harris had been unaware of its existence. It appeared however that the depot has been signed off by the Secretary of State.

Ward Cllr R. Sands also reported a hit and run involving a parked car and a Thamesport lorry in St Mary Hoo. Where it appeared that after the lorry had taken the wrong turning it attempted to turn around and wrote off a car in the process, before leaving the scene.

Ward Cllr R. Sands ended his report to advise that he understood Medway One were submitting a planning application shortly concerning the Uniper waste disposal power station.

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6. Planning

a). Applications

HHPC3030:21.04.21 Cllr R. Collins spoke to confirm that there had been two new planning applications submitted since the last meeting.

- **MC/21/0983 – 1A Heronsbank, Britannia Road, High Halstow, ME3 8AF**
Cllr R. Collins spoke to advise that he had no objections to this application.
- **MC/21/0425 – The Barn Owl, Sharnal Street, High Halstow, ME3 8QR**
Cllr R. Collins spoke to advise that he understood the homeowners had submitted an application to remodel the barn into accommodation.

He advised that having checked the planning portal that a previous application for the same conversion had been declined based on concerns over road access, where he also observed that several of the neighbouring properties had submitted their objections.

Based on the above Cllr R. Collins recommended that the Parish Council submit an objection, based on concerns over the road access again and to ask that the neighbouring residents' comments were taken into consideration.

- **MC/21/1110 - Land Adjoining To 35 Cooling Road High Halstow Rochester Medway ME3 8SA**
Cllr R. Collins spoke to acknowledge receipt of the above application, concerning additional surveys.

b). Decisions

HHPC3031:21.04.21 Cllr R. Collins spoke to confirm receipt of five (5) new planning decisions, four (4) of which had been agreed subject to conditions and one (1) had been declined:

Agreed subject to conditions:

- **MC/21/0305 - Dux Court, Dux Court Road**
- **MC/20/3209 - 3 Leaman Close**
- **MC/21/0090 - 16 Christmas Lane**
- **MC/20/3130 - St Margarets Church**

Declined:

- **MC/21/0087 – The Barn, Dalham Farm**

c). Appeals and other matters

HHPC3032:21.04.21 None.

d). Redrow Development (Heronden Grange)

HHPC3033:21.04.21 The Chairman, Cllr G. Crozer, spoke to advise that he had no further update/news concerning the Heronden Grange development.

e). Neighbourhood Plan

f). Local Plan

HHPC3034:21.04.21 Cllr G. Crozer spoke to advise that the Neighbourhood Plan Committee were still liaising with Mr D. Rudlin of Urbed to finalise their design code, which they hoped would help to mould the off the shelf dwellings proposed in the HIF Bid and Local Plan.

He advised that he understood the Local Plan had been centred around 12,000 new houses, of which 10,600 had been included in the HIF bid, however in 2020 the Cabinet office reported that the Hoo Peninsula had reached its full capacity, yet now there apparently seemed to be additional space for another 1000 homes, which it would appear Redrow were trying to take full advantage of.

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Cllr G. Crozer spoke further to advise that Redrow had confirmed that they would not be applying for planning permission unless the Local Plan had been passed, which he necessarily did not believe to be true.

He advised that the feedback received from Urbed confirmed that the members existing design code was good but there was still room for improvement, where he also understood that a planning application to develop the land east of Hoo was due to be submitted in July.

Accordingly, he confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan Committee were arranging to meet with Redrow to review the design code, where they hoped to utilise the services of Mr D. Rudlin of Urbed at this meeting, as it was felt that Redrow would be very persistent in steering their way forward and pursuing every avenue.

He asked the members to vote to formally instruct Mr D. Rudlin of Urbed, to work alongside High Halstow Parish Council where he asked each member in turn for his or her opinion.

Cllr R. Collins spoke first to advise that he felt the Parish Council needed proper guidance as none of the members were professionals in this field. He also acknowledged that Urbed were recognised by the National Plan and voted in favour of instructing them.

Cllr T. Munday spoke next to advise that he was also in favour of using Urbed, where he felt that High Halstow Parish Council would be judged on the results ultimately.

Cllr C. MacFarlane spoke to confirm that she was also in agreement, providing the members could afford the fees.

Cllr C. Watson spoke in support too and advised that she felt the feedback received from Urbed so far had been invaluable.

Cllr M. Buckland spoke in support and agreed with the use of a specialist.

Finally, Cllr G. Jerreat spoke, where he concurred with his colleagues' comments and spoke in support of using Urbed, like Cllr C. MacFarlane however, he also raised concerns in regards to the cost of their fees.

The Chairman, Cllr G. Crozer, responded to thank the members for their support and for their comments. He advised that the costs of Urbed's fees were presently unknown, however he believed that they worked on a set daily rate.

He suggested that the Neighbourhood Plan Committee should arrange for an emergency meeting to decide how to move forward and proposed that High Halstow Parish Council should take their advice. This proposal was seconded by Cllr R. Collins and unanimously agreed.

g). Section 106 monies

HHPC3035:21.04.21 Cllr R. Collins spoke to ask the Clerk if she had responded to Ms J. King of Medway Council, following a Finance Committee meeting held with her on Friday 19th March. Mrs J. Allen spoke in response to advise that she had replied.

The Chairman, Cllr G. Crozer also spoke to advise that he had been approached by Ward Cllr R. Sands to join forces with Hoo Parish Council. Where it had been suggested to elect two members from each Council as representatives to attend each other's meetings.

He asked the members in turn for their opinion, where everyone collectively confirmed that they thought this suggestion was a good idea.

Cllr M. Buckland spoke to put himself forward as one of the two representatives, where the Chairman confirmed he would be the second.

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Cllr G. Crozer spoke to formally propose that the members combined forces with Hoo Parish Council, this proposal was seconded by Cllr M. Stone and unanimously agreed.

Ward Cllr R. Sands spoke in response to advise that he had envisaged that the Parish Councils would still have their own identities but could speak with one voice.

He also spoke to highlight an advertisement for a vacancy he had seen within Medway Council for a 'Senior Planner'.

7. Finance

a). Bank Balances

HHPC3036:21.04.21 Cllr R. Collins referred the members to the bank statements provided in their meeting packs, where he talked them through the balances.

He confirmed that the Parish Council had almost two years' worth of precept monies in their reserves and accordingly he felt that they could afford to fund the services of Mr D. Rudlin of Urbed.

b). BACS payments made since the last meeting

HHPC3037:21.04.21 The Councillors carefully reviewed the BACS payments made since the last meeting, where it was unanimously agreed that these payments were acceptable.

c). Accounts for Payment

HHPC3038:21.04.21 Cllr G. Crozer, read aloud the proposed payments, as per shown below. These payments were accepted, having been proposed by Cllr T. Munday, seconded by Cllr M. Stone and unanimously agreed.

Payee	Reference	Payment Method	Amount	Notes
Mr M. Rowe	-	STANDING ORDER	£70.00	Hire of Garages
Groundwork UK	-	PAID BY BACS	£659.00	Return of unspent grant funds INV: NPG-11549
Urbed	-	PAID BY BACS	£1,800.00	Review of NHP Design Code INV: 2077
KALC	-	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£42.00	'All About the AGAR' training session by KALC INV: 1648928947
Troy Planning	-	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£1,200.00	Preparation of presentation and attendance at Design South East Review INV: 1944
MailXMaster	-	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£1,440.00	Electronic filing system with up to 10 users INV: 0000002
Smart Print Services	-	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£62.40	Urbed Report x 12 Design South East Report x 12

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				INV: 103687
Smart Print Services	-	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£736.00	HHT April 2021 INV: 103688
BLM Ltd	-	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£1,865.00	Grounds Maintenance March 2021 INV: 9908
Stoke Parish Council	HHPC233:11.12.19	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£19.10	50% contribution towards the Telephone & Broadband communications package
J Allen	HHPC1029:13.01.2 1	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£36.00	Office allowance from 11/03/20 to 21/04/21
HMRC	-	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£479.20	March Tax & NI for JB, JG & JA
J Gallivan	-	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£649.04	March 2021 Wages
J. Balciunas	-	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£780.29	March 2021 Wages
J Allen	-	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£644.48	March 2021 Wages
Smart Pension	-	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£39.96	March 2021 Employee Pension Contributions (deducted at source)
Smart Pension	-	TO BE PAID BY BACS	£23.98	March 2021 Employer Pension Contributions
TOTAL			£10,546.45	

8. Grant Applications

HHPC3039:21.04.21 None.

9. Management of Land and Property

a). Recreation Ground

HHPC3040:21.04.21 The Vice-Chair Cllr C. Watson spoke to confirm that she had no report.

The Chairman, Cllr G. Crozer also spoke to enquire if the football pitch markings were being maintained. The Clerk responded to confirm that she had already raised this matter with the contractors, to ensure the markings were being well kept.

b). Play Parks

HHPC3041:21.04.21 Cllr R. Collins reported that he had spoken to three contractors to obtain quotes to install a soft surfacing underneath the swinging basket in the recreation ground, where accordingly he advised the members of the following responses:

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- Safeplay - £6,400.00
- Abacus - £8,100
- 3rd contractor did not respond

Cllr R. Collins confirmed that the installation of the surfacing would be covered by the Section 106 funds.

The members carefully considered the two quotes received back, where it was proposed by Cllr G. Crozer to accept the quote from Safeplay. This proposal was seconded by the Vice-Chair Cllr C. Watson and unanimously agreed.

c). Allotments

HHPC3042:21.04.21 Following Cllr L. Atkinson's absence it was accepted that there was no report on the allotments.

d). Forge Common

HHPC3043:21.04.21 Cllr R. Collins spoke to advise that he had no report.

e). Village Grounds Maintenance

HHPC3043:21.04.21 The Chairman, Cllr G. Crozer, reported that he had been approached by a few residents who had highlighted some additional green spaces that had not been included in the members' map. Accordingly, he advised that he was in the process of rectifying this.

The Chairman, Cllr G. Crozer spoke further to advise that he understood Taylor Wimpy had accepted the members' 10% increment in their fees and that they had provided permission for the installation of seating on their land.

Finally, he advised that the family of a late resident had spoken to him in regards to placing a bench on Forge Common in his memory, close to the Marsh Crescent/ Northwood Avenue entrance. He asked the members to vote to confirm their consent where he proposed that the members granted the family permission. This proposal was seconded by Cllr M. Stone and unanimously agreed.

f). Notice Boards

HHPC3044:21.04.21 Cllr M. Stone spoke to advise that following the feedback she had received from the Parish Council, that she understood that 8 out of the 9 of the members were happy to park the idea of a digital noticeboard for the time being.

HHPC3045:21.04.21 Additionally Cllr M. Stone advised that the members had voted on their preferred material for the new notices board where seven (7) members had voted for oak, one (1) for one board to be made from oak and the other aluminium and finally one member had abstained, where he or she had asked for the existing notice boards to be refurbished.

The members collectively discussed the idea of the existing notice boards being refurbished, where the members were torn if this job would be for either a carpenter or a joiner.

Cllr M. Stone spoke to confirm that she would obtain a quote for some notice boards to be made from oak, where Cllr R. Collins also agreed to source a costing for the refurbishment of the old notice boards. Once received, it was determined that the members would reach a final decision at their next meeting.

Ward Cllr R. Sands also spoke to remind the members that he had offered a £250.00 grant towards each new notice boards, where he asked for the members to email him with their account details.

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10. Highways & Transport

a). Public Rights of Way

[HHPC3046:21.04.21](#) Cllr G. Crozer spoke to inform the members that there had been an altercation surrounding the R240 footpath, where an irate tenant had complained that the wrong kissing gates had been installed, and that the new gates were interfering with his livestock.

After much back-and-forth Cllr G. Crozer confirmed that with the assistance of Cllr R. Collins and the Footpaths Officer Mr A. Taylor, that they had collectively had resolved the query and the footpath was due to be closed for adaptations to the gates on Monday 10th May.

Cllr G. Crozer spoke further to advise that he also believed the RS44 footpath was in the incorrect place and that the right of way needed to be moved closer to the ditch.

Finally he confirmed that the RS46 footpath had been diverted, owing to the poor condition of the land the path was proposed to cross over, that the footpath near to Christmas Lane have been diverted and that a new path from Solomans Farm heading towards Deangate Ridge had been mooted.

b). Street Cleaning

[HHPC3047:21.04.21](#) Cllr G. Jerreat spoke to advise that he had received notification that Mr J. Gallivan had been in hospital and accordingly he had left a message for Mr J. Gallivan to call him back once he had returned home.

The Chairman, Cllr G. Crozer, spoke in response to advise that he had seen Mr J. Gallivan, who now appeared to be back at work.

With permission from the Chairman, a member of the public also spoke to advise that she too had seen Mr J. Gallivan at work and that upon speaking with him he had seemed very diligent, despite a recent minor operation on his eye.

Queries surrounding the need for a return-to-work letter were discussed.

c). Tree Wardens Report

[HHPC3048:21.04.21](#) Cllr R. Collins spoke to confirm that a resident had very kindly donated two established trees.

Concerns were raised by Cllr G. Crozer surrounding their root stock, where Cllr M. Stone also spoke to enquire if the members had considered a watering programme for the new trees.

A discussion ensued where Cllr R. Collins volunteered himself in watering the two new trees.

d). Bus Shelters

[HHPC3049:21.04.21](#) Cllr G. Jerreat spoke to advise that following a query surrounding the installation of the new bus shelter at Britanna Road ref: [HHPC2077:10.03.21](#) , that the shelter had been checked and it had been established that the shelter had been installed correctly.

He also raised an observation made by Cllr L. Atkinson, that the windows on the bus shelters had become very dirty. Cllr G. Crozer spoke in response to suggest this task be added to the things do list of for the volunteers next community event.

11. Internal Committee Updates

a). High Halstow Community Support Committee

[HHPC3050:21.04.21](#) Cllr M. Stone spoke to refer the members to a report she had prepared and circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Annex A](#).

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She also informed the members' that she had been approached by wHoo Cares to ask if they could place some posters in the members notice board to promote their latest recruitment drive for volunteers.

b). High Halstow Environment Group

[HHPC3051:21.04.21](#) Cllr M. Stone spoke to ask the members to refer to a copy of her report she had prepared and circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Annex B](#).

Cllr M. Stone also advised that she had been contacted by the Vicar, who had received further enquiries from residents wanting to join the committee. Accordingly, she confirmed that the next Environment Group meeting had been scheduled to take place on Tuesday 27th April at 7.00pm, where she confirmed that a warm welcome awaited any members who wanted to attend.

Finally, Cllr M. Stone reported that she had met High Halstow Primary Academy, who seemed very keen to partake in the tree planting project, scheduled to take place in the autumn. She also confirmed that the school seemed very interested in joining any recycling projects within the village, including the new Eco Hub.

c). GDPR & Policy Working Party

[HHPC3052:21.04.21](#) Cllr T. Munday spoke to inform the members that following a meeting of the GDPR & Policy Working Party that the members had managed to finalise the GDPR documents policy, which they were hoping to circulate for adoption at the members' next Parish Council meeting.

Accordingly, he asked the Clerk to ensure that this point was added onto the agenda.

12. External Committee Updates

a). KALC

[HHPC3053:21.04.21](#) No report.

b). Rural Liaison

[HHPC3054:21.04.21](#) Cllr R. Collins spoke to confirm that he had already circulated a copy of his report from the last Rural Liaison meeting, please refer to [Annex C](#).

He spoke further to advise that the members of the committee had discussed the proposed new rail link for the Peninsula, where he understood that the loop to Strood had now been scrapped.

He also advised that the committee had requested an additional meeting to discuss the rail link, as a possible freight line from Paddock Wood through to Kingsnorth had been discussed, which raised many more questions.

Finally, he advised the members that he believed there had been a contingency budget set aside of £1.3 million to cover the rail installations, where Cllr G. Crozer spoke to advise that he presumed this was one of the proposed three new routes onto the Peninsula.

c). High Halstow Primary Academy

[HHPC3055:21.04.21](#) The Vice-Chair, Cllr C. Watson, referred the members to a report the school had prepared, which she had circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Annex D](#).

d). Friends of St Margaret's

[HHPC3056:21.04.21](#) Cllr R. Collins spoke to advise that following the easing of the COVID-19 restrictions that the window repair contractors were back at work. He also confirmed that a trustees meeting was being organised to take place shortly.

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e). Towards Plastic Free Medway

To agree that the Chair sign the pledge for Towards Plastic Free Medway

HHPC3057:21.04.21 Cllr M. Stone spoke to advise that she had no report. She also reminded the Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, to organise the charity's pledge for signature by the Parish Council.

13. Communications

a). High Halstow Times

HHPC3058:21.04.21 Cllr M. Stone spoke to advise the members that the next deadline for copy material was Sunday 25th April. She also informed the members that she had placed an advert in the latest edition of the High Halstow Times on behalf of wHoo Cares.

b). Website

HHPC3060:21.04.21 Cllr T. Munday spoke to advise that he was in the process of updating the members' website to confirm as per the temporary closure of the RS40 footpath.

He also advised that comparing the High Halstow Parish Council website to others Parishes, that he felt the webpage required further redevelopment.

Accordingly, he asked the members for their feedback and confirmed that he would source quotes for assistance in upgrading webpage.

c). Reintroduction of Face to Face meetings

HHPC3061:21.04.21 The Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to inform the members that after midnight on Thursday 6th May, that permission to meet by an online forum had been retracted by the Government.

Cllr T. Munday spoke to advise of alternative options for the members to meet virtually in an unofficial capacity, where required.

14. Police Matters

a). Neighbourhood Watch

HHPC3062:21.04.21 The Vice-Chair Cllr C. Watson spoke to advise that she had no report.

b). Police Surgery - next meeting 04.05.2021

HHPC3063:21.04.21 Cllr T. Munday spoke to ask the members to contact him directly if they had any urgent Police matters. He reminded the Councillors that the next Police surgery had been scheduled to take place on Tuesday 4th May.

15. Halls

a). Recreation (Village) Hall

HHPC3064:21.04.21 Cllr R. Collins advised that the Village Hall Committee were due to meet shortly to finalise their risk assessments to open the hall before the Government deadline of Monday 21st June.

He also advised that owing to the pandemic, the number of people allowed in the Village Hall at any one time, had been reduced to thirty (30).

b). Memorial Hall

HHPC3065: 21.04.21 Cllr R. Collins reported the Memorial Hall would not re-open until Monday 21st June.

He also reminded the members that owing to the pandemic the number of people allowed in the Memorial Hall at any one time had been reduced to twenty (20).

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16. Village Reports

a). Relief in Need

[HHPC3066:21.04.21](#) With permission from the Chairman, Ms C. Peek spoke to confirm the members that she had not prepared a report for this month, as there was nothing new to report.

17. Consultations

[HHPC3067:21.04.21](#) None.

18. Correspondence

[HHPC3068:21.04.21](#) None.

19. Reports & Circulars

a). Annual Parish Meeting & The Annual Parish Council Meeting

To discuss and set dates for the Annual Parish Council Meeting and the Annual Parish Meeting.

[HHPC3069:21.04.21](#) Following a conversation surrounding the return of 'Face to Face' meetings, ref [HHPC3061:21.04.21](#), the Councillors agreed to schedule the Annual Parish Meeting, followed by the Annual Parish Council meeting to take place by a virtual form on Thursday 6th May at 7.00pm.

It was also recognised that both meetings had to finish before midnight to keep within the Government's latest legislation.

Before the Chairman opened the Public Session, he asked the members to confirm if they had any other business, he asked each Councillor in turn where it was established the members had none.

Public Session

Cllr G. Crozer opened the floor to the public, where no further questions or queries were raised.

20. Date of next meeting

[HHPC3070:21.04.21](#) The Chairman, Cllr G. Crozer, spoke to confirm that the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Parish Council meeting had been scheduled to take place on Thursday 6th May, at 7.00pm, via a virtual forum.

21. Section 100A

[HHPC3071:21.04.21](#) The Chairman, Cllr G. Crozer, read out loud the statement listed on the agenda in relation to Section 100A(4).

It was proposed by the Chairman Cllr G. Crozer, that the public be excluded from the next item, which was seconded by the Vice Chair Cllr C. Watson, and unanimously agreed.

The one member of the public and Ward Cllr R. Sands left at 9.09pm.

22. Personnel

[HHPC3072:21.04.21](#) The meeting carried on, where the Clerk, Mrs J. Allen, spoke to update the members on a private personnel matter.

Owing to the Clerk's request to temporarily reduce her hours the members agreed to employ a temporary assistant Clerk for a maximum to 20 hours.

Cllr T. Munday spoke to propose that the new assistant Clerk be employed initially for a maximum of 20 hours, this proposal was seconded by Cllr C MacFarlane and unanimously agreed.

23. Close of meeting

[HHPC3073:21.04.21](#) The Chairman, Cllr G. Crozer, closed the meeting at 9.25pm and thanked everyone for attending.

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The next Parish Council meeting will be held on:

Thursday 6th May	7.00pm	Virtual Forum
The Annual Parish Meeting followed by the Annual Parish Council Meeting		

ANNEXES

Annex A

High Halstow Community Support Committee

REF: **HHPC3050:21.04.21**

(Awaiting copy of report from Cllr M. Stone).

Annex B

High Halstow Environment Group

REF: **HHPC3051:21.04.21**

(Awaiting copy of report from Cllr M. Stone).

Annex C

Rural Liaison

REF: **HHPC3054:21.04.21**

Resume of the Rural Liaison Meeting - Tuesday 20 April 2021

The following report was supposed to have been delivered by Michael Edwards who did not turn up to the meeting. The Chairman along with other members added their disapproval of his non-attendance because there were many questions from this report than answers. The Chairman requested he attend the next meeting

TRAFFIC MANGEMENT ON THE HOO PENINSULA

Report from: Ruth Du-lieu, Assistant Director – Frontline Services Author: Michael Edwards, Head of Transport and Planning Summary

This report provides an update in relation to the management of traffic on the Hoo Peninsula. Specifically, providing updates on current actions that form part of the overall management of traffic on the Peninsula, including items that were recorded at the 7 of December 2020 committee meeting.

1. Background

1.1 A Medway Council report covering traffic management and Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) parking issues on the A228 and surrounding roads on the Peninsula was discussed at the December 2020 Rural Liaison Committee. The committee requested a report to update on diversion route proposals and noted the following:

- a) that the Head of Transport and Parking will be progressing the diversion route plan on the Peninsula for the necessary technical check and road safety audit prior to implementation.
- b) that the Head of Transport and Parking will be investigating the potential provision of a series of crossovers along the A228 central reservation from Four Elms Hill roundabout through to Main Road, Hoo, to allow vehicles to cross onto the other side of the carriageway enabling the implementation of an emergency contraflow.

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- c) that an audit of the HGV signage on the Peninsula would take place to identify any potential gaps and officers have suggested that a review be undertaken as to whether any specific roads needed to be the subject of a Traffic Regulation Order as opposed to the placement of advisory signage.
- d) that the Head of Transport and Parking has agreed to refer the issue of air quality and concerns that lorry drivers are using the roadside as a toilet to colleagues in Environmental Health Agenda Item 5
- e) that the Head of Planning has confirmed that the Amazon lorry park is intended for use by lorries not just trailers but was currently only partially complete and he would investigate and report back upon the comments that Amazon were, or intended to, charge for use of the lorry park.

1.2 The following provides updates relating to work streams that cover items a) to c) above.

2. Report

2.1 The following provides updates covering ongoing work streams that relate to: diversion route planning, incident management, LGV use of rural roads/routes, and LGV parking.

2.2 Diversion Route Planning

The initial diversion route signing plans have continued to be developed and a specification to sign diversion routes in the event of a main route closure has been produced. Consultation has taken place with the Council's Highway Design Team as part of the technical development of the proposals. As a consequence, some amendments have been made to the original proposals. These are continuing to be refined at present. Once confirmed, design proposals will be confirmed for wider technical appraisal and safety review.

2.3 LGV use of Rural Roads

Work has begun on a project seeking to deter use of roads that are not suitable for LGV's. The aim of the project is to place signage at junctions to deter large vehicles from entering those roads/routes. Site surveys have been completed to confirm in concept the junctions and therefore roads that would benefit from new signage. The Council's highway designers have been commissioned to draw up signing proposals. This work is ongoing, once ready the proposals will be subject to internal technical appraisal.

2.4 Four Elms Hill Contraflow Concept

A project has been initiated to explore the feasibility of emergency contraflow working on Four Elms Hill between Four Elms roundabout and Main Road, Hoo. There are broadly two elements to this, firstly, the physical highway changes that would need to be made/constructed in order to allow vehicles to physically move from one side of the dual carriageway to the opposing side, and secondly, the temporary traffic management and associated emergency response that would be required in order to allow any contraflow system to operate.

2.5 As this work is exploratory it is not possible to confirm at this stage that a workable scheme will be deliverable.

2.6 The project is coordinating closely with the HIF scheme as there is physical overlap. This scheme will continue to be progressed during the 2021/22 financial year.

2.7 Ratcliffe Highway

The Committee will be aware that Ratcliffe Highway has suffered from large goods vehicles parking at the roadside. This has led to obstruction of the footway route, amongst other impacts.

2.8 There has been a notable reduction in on street parking of large vehicles at Ratcliffe Highway. The Council's engineers have continued to monitor the situation whilst also developing proposals to introduce parking restrictions. The aim of the restrictions being to control the volume of parked vehicles along with maintaining a walking route free for pedestrians. At the time of writing, it is envisaged that any parking restrictions would be progressed on an experimental traffic order basis. This would allow changes to be made as appropriate in the early life of the restrictions. The proposals have been prepared for consultation, which will take place with Peninsula Ward Members.

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3. Options

3.1 No options are set out in relation to the content of this report, which seeks to provide updates to the committee covering specific actions.

4. Advice and analysis

4.1 This report provides updates on work streams and ongoing live projects that are continuing to be progressed in the interests of managing the traffic and responding to traffic issues on the Peninsula.
4.2 These projects will continue to be progressed during the 2021/22 year.

5. Consultation

5.1 Consultation as appropriate would form part of each project proposal once any schemes are suitably advanced.
5.2 Proposals in relation to Ratcliffe Highway to introduce parking restrictions have reached the point at which consultation with Ward Members can take place.

6. Financial and legal implications

6.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report. Project and work stream costs are covered via agreed budget allocations within the Transport and Parking Service.

6.2 There are currently no legal implications in respect of this report. The work streams discussed within this report fall within the powers of Medway Council as the local highway authority.

7. Recommendations

7.1 That the committee notes the updates within this report.

Lead officer contact Michael Edwards, Head of Transport and Parking,

Tele no: 01634 331113

Email: michael.edwards@medway.gov.uk

It was reported that Amazon's lorry park was now fully operational but that it was only a trailer park and there were still problems with Amazon lorries' parking away from the site and causing problems.

It was also raised that some Amazon Lorries were going to Grain for custom clearance one of which on the night of 19 April had been in an accident at Stoke writing off a car involved. The chairman asked for further information on why lorries had to go to Grain.

Subsequent to the meeting the following report was received

At the Rural Liaison Committee last night there was some discussion about the use of Thamesport by Amazon for customs clearance and whether this needed planning permission.

I have had an email exchange with the Head of Planning this morning and he has confirmed the following:

On 24 September 2020 the Government brought into force the Town and Country Planning (border facilities and infrastructure) (EU exit)(England) special development order 2020.

This enables them to change the use of land to customs purposes without requiring planning permission. In the Order they specified the Council's this related to and that included Medway although it was not specific of a site.

I did a presentation, to which all members were invited, in September where I talked through the changes to planning legislation, including this, along with proposals for further changes in the white paper. At the presentation I spoke about the SDO and how it applied to Medway and that I personally thought a likely site would be in Grain.

Reading through the legislation again, the border department has to make a written submission to the secretary of state for approval for the use of any site. As part of the written submission there should be a report which includes how the border department has engaged with the engagement parties. The relevant engagement parties are:

- *The Local Council*

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- The LPA
- The LLFA
- The Local Highway Authority and
- The relevant Parish Council

As planning authority, I am not aware of any engagement re this site. I will check with the LLFA. Ruth Dulieu, Assistant Director Front Line Services will need to check re LHA and I will ask Sarah McNally if the Chief Executive has received anything. The Parish Council will also need to advise. However, what is clear though is that the site would not have been brought into use without the approval of the Secretary of State, which seems to have been done without feedback from the engagement parties.

Ellen Wright
Democratic Services Officer
Tele no 01634 332012
Email ellen.wright@medway.gov.uk

Martin Hall presented the following paper

UPDATE ON HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND BID

Report from: Richard Hicks, Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive
Author: Martin Hall, SEMS and Partnership Manager

Summary

This report seeks to update members of the Rural Liaison Committee on the Housing Infrastructure Fund New Routes to Good Growth bid. It covers ongoing developments of the road, rail and environment infrastructure, and the first round of HIF engagement and consultation.

1. Background

1.1 HIF is a capital scheme of £170m allocating £86m to road schemes, £64m to rail improvements and £14m to environmental measures. This spend is claimed retrospectively from Homes England, with total current claims (August to January 2021) valuing £4.6m. The HIF scheme is working to a deadline set by government of 31 March 2024.

1.2 The HIF scheme is core to the delivery of sustainable development of 10,600 homes on the Hoo Peninsula. This potential development will be masterplanned in the Hoo Development Framework, which will be a part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and the Council's policy framework.

1.3 The HIF proposals are intended to address the challenge of getting on and off the peninsula by providing three ways on and three ways off (the proposed new link road connecting the A289 to A228, the existing but improved Four Elms Hill junction and the new rail passenger service). This is in addition to the improvements being planned for Bells Lane, Ropers Lane and Main Road junctions.

1.4 The proposed environmental improvements will create new open spaces that will support wildlife and landscape features and, where appropriate, new footpaths and cycleways. These will complement the existing footpath network and support walking and cycling around the peninsula for both existing and new residents.

1.5 A dedicated HIF team was established in August 2020 with leads working on road, rail and environmental matters. Externally funded resource has been secured to support the financial claims process and to sustain liaison with Homes England on the Grant Determination Agreement's milestones, programme and cash flow. The continued development of the road and rail interventions has ensured that the road designs have reached their design freeze in January 2021 and the rail has completed Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) 2 and commenced GRIP 3 (Options). The HIF environmental scheme has seen the development of the 50ha Cockham Community Parkland for which the planning application was submitted in January 2021.

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2. Report

2.1 Road:

The current road proposals are set out across six phases and include phase 1 (proposed on / off slips and overbridge and improvements to Islingham Farm Road), phase 2 (proposed new road from Upchat roundabout linking to a revised junction with Main Road, phase 3 (improvements to Bells Lane junction), phase 4 (improvements to Ropers Lane and Stoke Road roundabouts (providing access to the proposed station), phase 5 (improvements to Four Elms roundabout and finally phase 6 (improvements to Sans Pareil roundabout). All the above have been subject to Road Safety Assessments, modelling and design. During the recent HIF consultation residents of Islingham Farm and Higham Road put forward a suite of alternative phase 1 proposals. These are currently being reviewed by the council.

2.2 Rail:

For operational reasons, the proposed station at Sharnal Street has been relocated 500m to the east. Also, reflecting on comments on demand from Network Rail and the franchisee, the rail curve connecting the Grain Freight Line to the North Kent Line has been removed from HIF. The train service continues to support a peak period two hourly service to London Charing Cross via Gravesend. More details on the rail scheme are available in the HIF Brochure (see weblink at end of the report). Medway Council undertook a high-level demand analysis with rail stakeholders to ascertain whether the proposed infrastructure would be able to meet the current passenger demand. Through this analysis it was determined that there was not enough demand for a local Medway service that would make it viable at this stage without a substantial subsidy. In time as the demand grows with the potential development of housing this may change and would be dependent on additional funding available in the future at the appropriate time. It was therefore determined that the curve be removed at this stage with passive provision made for the curve should demand increase in the future years, allowing the potential for this to be delivered as a later phase.

2.3 Environmental matters:

The Strategic Environmental Management Scheme (SEMS) is developing detailed masterplans and management plans for improvements to a network of large tracks of land in and around Hoo. The dual role of these proposed sites is to provide new landscape and habitats for wildlife in parallel with increased access and low-key recreational space for residents. The most advanced of these proposals is the Cockham Community Parkland, which is a c.50ha site that will see the creation of new woodland, hedges and neutral grassland alongside protection of important woodland and the creation of new rights of way. This scheme has been subject to consultation and is due to go to Medway's Planning Committee on 28 April 2021.

2.4 To respond to the wider environmental designations on the Hoo Peninsula, the HIF proposals are being informed by a suite of environmental and ecological strategies. The Cumulative Ecological Impact Assessment (CEIA) will assess the impact of delivery of the HIF infrastructure and the possible growth options, and proposes a strategy, based on the National Planning Policy Framework's hierarchy, of avoid, mitigate, compensate, and enhance in relation to biodiversity. The HIF's Strategic Environmental Management Scheme (SEMS) is in place to deliver the appropriate mitigation and compensation opportunities. In addition to the CEIA and SEMS, separate Environmental Impact Assessments are underway for the proposed road and rail interventions. These will result in two Environmental Statements covering noise, dust, light, air quality and other issues such as ecological and heritage matters.

3 Options

3.1 Not applicable.

4. Advice and analysis

4.1 Not applicable.

5. Consultation

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5.1. The first stage of HIF consultation commenced on 11 January 2021 and finished on 6 April 2021. This time period reflects a four-week extension to the previous end date of 8 March. The consultation forms a key component for the rail's Transport and Works Act Order planning approach. For road and Strategic Environmental Management Scheme (SEMS), the consultation feedback will continue to inform the schemes development and subsequent consenting applications. To ensure residents were aware of the consultation process and how to get involved leaflets were sent to every household on the Peninsula, as well as parts of Strood North Ward and urban areas of Strood Rural Ward. An online brochure on road, rail and environmental infrastructure was made available online which providing more detailed information on the schemes than could have been included in the HIF leaflet. Following the closure of the first phase of public consultation, a summary of responses is being created in the form of a Frequently Asked Questions sheet plus a Statement of Community Involvement.

5.2. During the HIF consultation virtual meetings were arranged for Parish Councils, Ward Councillors and Statutory Consultees. In addition, three virtual meetings took place with residents local to Higham Road. Further consultation on rail, road and SEMS will take place during their consenting process (Rail – Transport Works Act Order, Road – Side Roads Orders and SEMS – planning application).

6. Financial and legal implications

6.1. Legal implications:

The continued development and delivery of the HIF scheme will accord with council procedures and governance, and with the Grant Determination Agreement. Officers meet regularly with Homes England on the schedules of the Grant Determination Agreement and have agreed a Baseline Report covering milestones and cash flows. The HIF Members Advisory Board meets quarterly to monitor and steer HIF's progress.

6.2. Financial implications:

Following the award of £170million HIF grant funding, this was agreed by Full Council on 23 January 2020 as an addition to the capital programme. The full capital allocation of £170million is funded by Homes England, however if an overspend was to occur, the Council will be required to fund the first 1% from its own resources. At this stage of the project no overspend is anticipated.

7. Recommendations

7.1 The Committee is requested to note the report.

Lead officer contact Martin Hall, HIF SEMS and Partnership Manager

Tele no: 07710 716574

Email: martin.hall@medway.gov.uk.

There was considerable discussion on the proposed relief road and roundabout upgrades with many negative comments.

It was reported that the Military may still remain owners of Woodfield Road and it could be closed for certain military activities, also the speed ramps will remain although upgraded.

It was also reported that the environmental report for the route would not be ready for a further three months.

Catherine Smith also said traffic assessments were still being worked on.

Martin confirmed discussions were still ongoing with Frindsbury Extra concerning the proposed fly over and slip road at Wainscott and the new road layout of the Sans Pareil roundabout.

Through concerns of traffic flow the Committee through the Chair requested a complete timetable of works leading up to its completion in 2024.

Many councillors raised their concern over the scrapping of the proposed railways Medway Loop with some councillors still not aware it had been permanently removed. May thought it a detriment to the Medway towns. It would still mean everyone from the peninsular, including the 12,000 new home residents, still accessing the towns by road.

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An urgent matter by reason of special circumstance was raised by Frindsbury Extra reporting that one of their contractors was using a herbicide banned by Medway Council. It was agreed that all Parish Clerks would be circulated with a list of approved herbicides.

Annex D

High Halstow Primary Academy

REF: HHPC3055:21.04.21

Report prepared by Ms G. Stangroom:

The main update would be around the interest the children and staff are showing in becoming even more environmentally aware. Each class now has two 'Nature Squad' members to encourage all to get involved. We met with Marilyn Stone recently to discuss plans within the village and hope to collaborate further with our projects. We are at the early stages of our developments but as you may see in the HH Times we plan to develop a vegetable growing area, add some fruit trees, develop a sensory zone with seating and develop an area to encourage more wildlife.

The children have all come back positively since Easter.